

REMARKS

Substance of the Interview

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's time and effort in conducting the telephonic interview held on March 30, 2005. As correctly reflected in the Interview Summary dated April 4, 2005, no exhibits were shown or demonstrated during the interview. The claims discussed were Claims 1 and 6-8. The only prior art discussed was U.S. Patent No. 6,081,077 to Canova et al. The principle proposed amendments of a substantive nature that were discussed involved a discussion of a proposed amendment to Claim 1 specifying operation of the electronic ballast for "filamentless" discharge lamps. The general thrust of the principle arguments presented to the Examiner involved an explanation that the '077 ballast is inoperable for use with filamentless discharge lamps. It was generally agreed that replacing "a discharge lamp" with "a filamentless discharge lamp" would overcome the §102 rejection, but may not overcome a potential §103 rejection. The Examiner suggested further amending Claim 1 to add limitations and details for the claimed programmable processor and to the sustaining circuit. More particularly, it was suggested that limitations such as those contained in dependent Claims 2-3 and 6-7 may be incorporated into Claim 1 to help obviate a potential §103 rejection.

The Claim Objections/Minor Informalities Are Overcome

Claims 1, 4-6, 9, 14-18, 23, 25 and 28 are herein amended to incorporate each of the revisions set forth in section 3 of the Office Action. Reconsideration with favorable action is respectfully requested.

The Subject Matter of Claims 1 and 6-8 Is Not Anticipated By The '077 Patent to Canova.

In response to the rejection of Claims 1 and 6-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Canova (U.S. Patent No. 6,081,077), Applicants note that Canova teaches a ballast circuit with very limited application. More particularly, the Canova ballast circuit is limited to use with lamps having an internal filament. Canova's ballast circuit, in all embodiments, is dependent on a filament 21, 23 having a resistance R_{FIL} in order for the circuit to recognize the lamp among a

set of possible lamps which differ in power draw. (See FIGS. 3-5 and descriptions at column 3, line 45 to column 4, line 50, and column 6, lines 5-20) Discharge lamps that have no filament, such as mercury, metal halide and high pressure sodium lamps (see page 8, lines 13-14 of Applicants' description), cannot be operated by the Canova ballast circuit.

The invention as set forth in Claim 1 does not suffer the above limitation because operation of Applicants' ballast circuit is not dependent on the presence of a filament. To clarify this patentable distinction, Claim 1 is herein amended to specify an electronic ballast circuit for supplying electrical excitation to a "filamentless" discharge lamp. To further distinguish Claim 1 from the prior art, Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the limitations of Claim 6, including "an ignition circuit for producing an oscillating voltage signal for igniting the discharge lamp" and "a sustaining circuit for producing an oscillating current signal to sustain ignition of the discharge lamp." At column 4, lines 7-28, Canova teaches igniting the lamp by gradually increasing current to the lamp. Unlike the claimed invention, Canova does not ignite the lamp with an oscillating voltage signal.

Since Canova neither teaches nor suggests a ballast circuit as set forth in the amended Claim 1, it is believed that Claim 1 is allowable and such action is respectfully requested.

The limitations of Claim 6 have been incorporated into Claim 1, and Claim 6 has therefore been cancelled. Thus, the rejection of Claim 6 has been obviated.

Claims 7-8 further limit an allowable claim in ways that are neither taught or suggested by the prior art. For example, nothing in the cited reference teaches or suggests a sustaining circuit that is "inductorless" as set forth in Claim 7. Contrary to the assertion in the Office Action, the Canova ballast circuit does utilize an inductor (see FIG. 1, element 17) to sustain ignition of the lamp. Claims 7-8 are therefore allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, with favorable action, is respectfully requested.

New Claims 29-33 Are Allowable Over The Prior Art.

The Office Action notes that Claims 3, 10, 11, 14 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. Accordingly, Claims 3, 10, 11, 14 and 16 have been rewritten as new Claims 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33,

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respectively. It is therefore believed that new Claims 29-33 are allowable and such action is respectfully requested.

Conclusion.

The Applicants have endeavored to address all of the Examiner's concerns expressed in the outstanding Office Action and during the telephonic interview of March 30, 2005. Accordingly, amendments to the claims, the reasons therefore, and arguments in support of the patentability of the pending claim sets are presented above. Applicants believe that all of Claims 1-33 are now in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$500.00 to cover the filing fees for the additional five independent claims, that is, new Claims 29-33.

In the event this response is not timely filed and an extension of time is not requested, Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for this extension, along with any other fees which may be due with respect to this response, may be charged to our deposit account No. 50-1971.

If the Examiner identifies additional issues which can be resolved by telephone, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at 918-595-4860.

Respectfully submitted,



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